

Assignment TV

By **TERRENCE O'FLAHERTY**

John Drake is unique as a television character. He is a super-secree agent but he carries no gun. He is very successful at his work, yet he makes no love to servative ladies either before, during, or after working hours. He solves his cases but he never gives off philosophy for any political cause.

Indeed, it is difficult to understand how he got on television at all. But he did and he is the leading character of a series, "Secret Agent," which not only has won over a sizeable audience of gun-hungry Americans but has even managed to unseat Lawrence Welk and his bubble machine from top spot in the ratings struggle.

The series is shot in England and is seen there as "Danger Man." Only recently was it made available on an international basis.

The actor who plays this summertime secret agent is a tall, quiet Irishman named Patrick McGoohan and his honor as a performer is even more unusual than his name. The series has a kind of galantry about it that makes it stand head and shoulders above phonies like "Burke's Law" and other fables of the Playboy Club level of children's sex dreams. Part of the reason for the mature tone of "Secret Agent" is McGoohan himself.

THERE IS practically no publicity furnished on McGoohan because he grants few interviews, refuses to use for publicity cheese-cake stills with leggy ladies who have nothing to do with the plot, and thinks that his private life should be his own and not the property of every jerk in the land who owns a television set. I had to learn about him through an article in the Manchester Guardian Weekly that was smuggled to me by a friend.

The story reports that when McGoohan was approached by the producers to do the show in England four years ago he laid down his own rules.

PV State Accredited On Opening

Students beginning classes this fall at the newly opened Palos Verdes State College will not face the usual uncertainty about accreditation which most students attending a new college face.

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), official accrediting agency for the western United States, has re-affirmed its position of a year ago which gives full accreditation to Palos Verdes State College, even before its first classes begin.

WASC confidence in the new institution is based not only on the reputation and resources of the state-wide college system, but also on the extensive planning which has gone into Palos Verdes State College, Dr. Harry A. Nethery, dean of facilities planning, said.

"I found the first few scripts full of contrived romantic liaison and full of excessive violence. I thought they were terrible and told them I could not do them in that form.

He insisted on script changes and then went on a holiday with his family in Wales. The English production company was, like those in America, unaccustomed to dealing with an actor who would rather stand on his principles than act. They made the changes. "Danger Man" became a British success and McGoohan became the Empire's highest-paid TV performer.

BUT THE recent sale to American TV caused a repetition of the original ruckus over the necessity for sex and violence.

According to the Guardian, a high-powered American executive descended on McGoohan for lunch and explained that while they love the series, certain changes were needed. Said McGoohan:

"They wanted sex in the stories, they wanted pictures of me on the set with glamour girls — the corny business formula, the publicity machine grinding away. He explained they would have to have these changes or they couldn't sell the stories abroad.

"Well, I said no and it turned out to be a six-minute lunch. But he went away and sold the series to 61 countries anyway and it's making a fortune."

THE GUARDIAN interviewer, Lee Langley, sees the series as a return to the dream simplicity of a man of honor cleaving to his principles in a dishonorable world. His Round Table may be nearer the United Nations than Camelot, but his motives are impeccably Arthurian.

"He is a virile television idol who declares without embarrassment his belief in God and his intention of living according to the teachings of the church, a sobering skeleton at the television feast. Disconcerting as it may be in the sophisticated framework of his job, McGoohan gives every sign of being, to the best of his ability, a good and honest man."

Can it be that the television producers don't really know much about the American television preference or that they don't really care?

Dan E. Butcher, 2371 Torrance Blvd., has received approval for development of 28 single-family lots in a five-acre parcel near Torrance Boulevard and the Harbor Freeway.

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